



United Nations
Economic Commission for Africa

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**African Regional Consultative Meeting on the Global Compact
for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

Opening Remarks

by

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Your Excellency **Dr. Aklilu Haile Michael**, State Minister for Foreign Affairs
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia,

Ms. Louise Arbour, Special Representative of the Secretary-General on
International Migration,

H.E. Amb. Albert Muchanga, Commissioner for Trade and Industry, African
Union Commission;

Your Excellency Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the
United Nations and co-facilitator of the process leading to the adoption of a global
compact on migration,

Excellencies, Ambassadors and Heads of Diplomatic Missions,

Heads of UN Agencies,

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the utmost pleasure to be here this morning for the opening of the *Africa Regional Consultative Meeting on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*. On behalf of the Economic Commission for Africa, I wish to extend a very warm welcome to everyone. ECA, in close collaboration with AUC and IOM, is greatly honored to guide the Global Compact on Migration process over the continent.

Migration is well recognized as an evitable part of the human experience and the mere presence of such a diverse representation of experts, policy-makers, government and civil society representatives testifies clearly to the importance of this regional consultation process as well as the individual and collective interests of African States to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people.

The outcome of this regional consultation is expected to inform the Global Compact on Migration process, which we know is a UN member state driven process aimed at improving governance of migration. Both the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General on International Migration, Ms. Louise Arbour, and one of the co-facilitators of the process towards the adoption of a global compact on migration, Ambassador Jürg Lauber, are here present and they will certainly expand later on the Global Compact on Migration process. Indeed, the landmark decision to achieve a global compact on migration is laudable.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the continental level, the global compact on migration consultations are taking place in the context of various global and regional frameworks previously entered into by African member states and which will be surely addressed during this consultative meeting, particularly by the AUC.

In the context of the global compact on migration process in Africa, (firstly) sub-regional consultations have been jointly organized by AUC, ECA and IOM with all member States and stakeholders; (secondly) analytical research has been undertaken to provide a situational analysis of international migration in Africa and (thirdly) pertinent information to broaden the scope and depth of input has been leveraged from on-going processes, notably the High Level Panel on International Migration in Africa. The process has culminated today in this African Regional Consultative Meeting.

It is noteworthy that the just concluded AU Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Migration, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, held a few days ago in Kigali, has adopted the ***Kigali Declaration*** including deliberations on a Common African Position on Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Both the outcome of the STC and the outcome document of the global compact on migration process in Africa are informing, in a complementary way, this regional consultation. The two processes are mutually supportive and

strengthening Africa's approach in the negotiations towards the Global Compact on Migration.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Around the world we are seeing a rise in anti-migrant sentiment and a prevalence of restrictive policies. A number of people and policymakers in destination countries fear that immigration leads to loss of jobs, imposes heavy burdens on public services, erodes social cohesion, and increases crime levels. Research demonstrates that these negative perceptions are factually not correct. The wage and employment effects of immigration are relatively small, since migrants and nationals are not competing for the same jobs; in many countries, migrants have net positive effect on government budgets.

In contrast to some regions of the world, African migration is widely depicted as a phenomenon driven by poverty, violence and other forms of human misery. Frequently, media images show African migrants in packed boats desperate to arrive on European shores. The increasing death toll this involves, over the years, has reinforced the image of a 'migration crisis'. Yet, the African migration drive is not necessarily exceptional or essentially different from migration in and from other world regions.

In fact, evidence shows that intra-African migration is dominant and 82 per cent of all migration flows are within Africa compared to only 12 per cent of Africans migration flows to Europe. These are familiar figures and should serve useful purpose to inform the political and policy agenda for Africa and in turn the Global Compact on Migration.

Although intra-Africa migration is the predominant type on the continent, travel in Africa by Africans is curtailed by stringent visa requirements, excessive border

controls and immigration restrictions that increase the costs and risks of migration and often come in conflict between individual motivation to migrate and state restrictions on mobility. The conflict facilitates the demand for private, and non-state, entrepreneurs, including smugglers, to facilitate movement, often with disastrous consequences.

Our studies at ECA indicate that Africa will account for 3.2 billion of the projected 4 billion increase in the global population by 2100. The working age population of the continent, particularly the youth, is also expected to rise to 2.1 billion by 2100, compared to a net global increase of 2 billion. Consequently, this youth population has the potential to increasingly become the major economic driving force behind Africa's projected economic growth in the coming years. However, in the absence of hope to these growing numbers, the alternative is to migrate and seek opportunities where they are perceived to exist.

African emigration can, primarily be explained through the lens of the processes of development and social transformation, which have increased young Africans' capabilities and aspirations to migrate. This trend is likely to continue in the future. Population growth and migration-facilitating development would mean that the share of Africans in the global migrant population is likely to increase further.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Migration has the potential of bringing significant contribution to economic growth and human development in Africa and we must work to ensure that Africa's narratives and priorities are adequately reflected in the six thematic areas of the global compact. The meeting should aim to further the actionable commitments coming out of the African Common Position on the Global Compact on Migration.

For the continent, it is crucial that the global compact on migration will set out a range of principles, commitments and understanding among Member States regarding international migration in all its dimensions; make an important contribution to global governance and enhance coordination on international migration; present a framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migrants and human mobility; and deal with all aspects of international migration, including the humanitarian, developmental, human rights-related and other aspects of migration.

Beyond the adoption of the global compact, sound and dynamic national policies and planning will be indispensable to the realization of the African outlook on migration. For this to be achieved, economic and social development policies and long-term vision will have to incorporate perspectives and concerns around migration.

Finally, allow me to underscore that it is also imperative that Africa generates its own evidence, robust data and statistics to effectively implement, accurately measure, monitor, evaluate and ultimately report on activities and progress under the global compact.

I thank you for your attention and wish you fruitful deliberations.